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MAPIT SKYWATCH

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Skywatch is an informal publication on unfology and related subjects.

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Readers' Letters

Dear David,

Many thanks for Skywatch 38; fascinating as always. I was particularly interested in Mark Moravec's article regarding psychological disturbance. Occultism and ufology overlap in this as in other ways. The people he described claimed to have seen Ufoss; I have met similar people claiming to live in haunted houses or to be suffering from spells cast by ill-intentioned neighbours. Sorry to see that 'beings from a ruined world seeking refuge on earth' syndrome has risen again. Janos - not even an original name! Live long and prosper, Magda Graham, Blackburn, Lancs.....

Dear David,

I was glad to read Mark Moravec's article in Skywatch 38; I do not see copies of the journal in which it appeared originally. He deals with a very important aspect of Ufo research. Certainly it would appear that psychoses are the cause of numerous ufo reports, particularly CE3 and CE4 reports. Competent ufologists will make themselves familiar with the effects of abnormal psychological processes and be prepared to consider them as one of many possible causes for ufo reports. I have investigated one CE3 report in Scotland which appears to have had such a cause. It is a pity that we do not hear the views of professional psychotherapists on the ufo problem; we could do with their help and they would find a rich area for study. But clearly Moravec is out of his depth in an area in which he is not professionally qualified. His unstructured account covers too much ground in too short a space and mixes the question of abnormal psychology with the far more controversial subject of psychic phenomena. Moreover, his term "mental communication" is unscientific, meaningless, and (in his article) undefined. Clearly there is a case for considering the hypothesis that some reports are the result of telepathy between aliens and humans. Unfortunately, Moravec has mixed up some very interesting facts with some less interesting speculation. Yours sincerely, Stuart Campbell, Edinburgh, Scotland.....

CE3S or CE3G ? *By Hilary Evans*

or How to tell the sheep from the space-age scapegoats.

UFOs are capable of being the strangest phenomena ever reported by one human being to another. They are the only phenomena for which a new categorisation has had to be introduced - the concept of High and Low Strangeness. It is of course the remarkable strangeness of the UFO which explains why, even after thirty years a great many people simply refuse to believe in them at all; and even the most open-minded student of the subject will admit that somewhere along the line, reality turns into fantasy.

But exactly where along the line?

A few of us have sought to evade the question on an all-or-nothing basis.

Yes (say the yes-sayers) there are UFOs and there are UFO-pilots, and there are UFO-related entities, and all are put together with nuts and bolts, or with the extra-terrestrial equivalent of flesh and blood, respectively.

No (reply the no-sayers) there are no UFOs, there are only illusions of UFOs, existing in the mind, and the supposed UFO-entities are as illusory as the ships they step out of.

However, reasonable people like you and me could not occupy either of these extreme positions without feeling uncomfortable. There are some UFO reports so factual that there just has to be some kind of reality involved; others are so clearly illusory that nobody in their right mind could think that anybody in his right mind could have experienced them. But is there any clear line of demarcation between the two? Are there any yardsticks which we can use to test the report and say Yes, this one is a CE3S (Sheep) while that one is a CE3G (goat)?

The Sheep/Goat metaphor happens to be happily appropriate. In a fascinating recent article in SKYWATCH (1) Australia's Mark Moravec produced a fine collection of case histories all of which, he suggested, were largely if not entirely subjective in nature. I doubt if many readers will have quarrelled with his verdict; I certainly didn't! Consequently we are committed to the fact that a considerable number of people are reporting, in all good faith, imaginary UFO-related events while believing them to be real; and doing so for reasons which, if Moravec's cases are representative, are not too hard to understand, even if you don't happen to have a diploma in psychoanalysis. What's happening is simply that the paranoid who used to project his spiritual upsets onto celestial or infernal visions has now found a new, updated carrier on whom to unload his burden of guilt, shame, remorse, resentment or whatever : a space-age scapegoat, in short.

But how do we separate the real live sheep (if any) from the all-in-the-mind scapegoat? In a recent lecture (2) I proposed some yardsticks which could help. They are useful only up to a point, admittedly : being themselves subjective, they could be used by different investigators to reach different conclusions. Still, for better or worse, here they are:

1. How real does the entity seem to have been ? (Along a scale ranging from hallucinations at one extreme to holograms at the other).
2. How believable does the appearance and behaviour of the entity seem to have been ? (by the standards of ordinary everyday reality).
3. How witness-oriented was the experience ? (Did it relate to his personal circumstances or preoccupations, or could the same thing have happened to anybody?)
4. How motivated was the witness to see such an entity? (Was there anything in his background or disposition which could make him want, if only unconsciously, to see such a thing?)

I tried these yardsticks out on a pair of classic cases. The Venusian that George Adamski claimed to have met in 1952 seems to have been real enough (3), if we can believe his other witnesses who claimed they saw him too, if only from a distance (personally, I don't rate their credibility very high, but let that pass: on the other hand, the episode was distinctly unbelievable, to put it mildly. The witness-orientation was very high, in that Adamski claimed to have been chosen by the extra-terrestrials as a representative of humankind, a choice not easy for many of us to understand; moreover, he was highly motivated to have an experience of this kind. Consequently, my yardsticks suggested that Adamski's Venusian existed only in his own mind; a veritable goat.

Using the same criteria, however, I decided that Monsieur Masse, in his lavender field at Valensole in 1965 (4) probably had a real encounter with alien entities. There was every indication that the experience was real, including physical traces: the episode was thoroughly believable, given the basic premise of a UFO landing. The occurrence was not geared to Mr. Masse as an individual, but sounds as though anybody else who had been there in his place would have had much the same experience; and despite thorough investigation by the police as well as ufologists, there was no indication that Masse was in any way predisposed to see, or wish to see, what he says he saw. So here, I concluded, we have good reason to suppose we have found a sheep.

Similarly with my own investigations. I was given some tapes to listen to recently recording a conversation between two alleged UFO witnesses. One may well have been genuine; Joan, the other - the subject of our enquiry; reported a rag-bag of assorted harassments, which she believed were the consequence of her having had access, as a political journalist, to classified information. This was causing 'them' - certain unnamed forces - to spy on Joan and cause all sorts of odd things to happen round the house - mysterious phone calls, strange lights and sounds, the usual... It was a mild version of Moravec's cases, and I had little difficulty in coming to the same conclusion as he did with his - that Joan's alleged experiences were the consequence of her personal state of mind. What in an earlier age she might have attributed to a malevolent demon, she now blamed on a UFO-entity : the space-age scapegoat again.

Note, though, that this does not necessarily mean that Joan's experiences did not occur. It is perfectly possible that some people, induced by a crisis in their lives, may initiate psychokinetic (PK) effects, unknown to themselves and even taking themselves quite by surprise. In a recent book (5) another writer from the Antipodes, Peter McKellar, Professor of psychology at Otago, NZ, encourages us to take a second look at the possibility that the 'divided self' or 'multiple personality' may account for a variety of paranormal events. That they could account for physical phenomena - that 'poltergeist' phenomena, for example, are PK-induced in this manner, has yet to be demonstrated; but many (I am one) believe that some such process is operating. And cases, well documented and have been meticulously investigated, show that it is possible for one part of our self to create hallucinations which present a total illusion of reality to another part of the self.

For example, in the classic Beauchamp case (6), B.IV (one of Miss Beauchamp's autonomous personalities) was totally convinced her feet had been cut off and were standing by themselves on the far side of the room; it was only when the investigating doctor contacted one of her other selves that he learnt that this was a deliberately created hallucination designed by 'Sally' (charming but irresponsible and frequently malicious aspect of Miss Beauchamp's personality) to torment her hated rival, B.IV. Well, if such things can happen, it is equally possible for a similar mechanism to operate in a UFO context: an alleged UFO or UFO-entity report may be no more than one part of the witness' mind reporting (quite sincerely) what it has been set up to see by another part.

(I am reassured to note that John Rimmer, Reader in Futurology at the University of Magonia ('What Magonia thinks today, other ufologists will think in 1985') is speculating along similar lines; recently in the Zetetic Scholar (7) he wrote: 'There is not need for this projection to be anything other than an internal projection from the unconscious to the conscious mind').

All that that tell us, of course, is how the trick may be performed; what it doesn't tell us is why. In the cases he cites, Moravec finds little difficulty in establishing valid motivations - recent divorces, the effects of emigration, loneliness; perhaps there is, in every one of us, sufficient motive arising from guilt, religious upbringing, career failure, breakdown of personal relationships, to drive us to exteriorise it in some such form as a vision of a UFO sighting. And Moravec is surely right in showing why it should take this particular form; The UFO-entity is the appropriate 'saviour' archetype for our space-age minds. Thus, in a case currently under investigation by Michael Goss and myself, we have a UFO-witness who reports not only an entity encounter of the bedroom-visitor variety, but also dreams in which three figures appear: one she likens to Jesus Christ; the second, a strikingly picturesque 'spacelady' who can readily enough be compared to the visions of Bernadette Soubirous and so many others; and the third, a young man dressed all in black... What archetype-hunter could ask for anything more?

But a difficulty arises. For where, in these instances, are Moravec's easily recognisable motivations? The witness is at least averagely happy, so far as we can tell, in a relaxed, togetherish family environment which combines personal freedom with security; she is physically attractive and does not lack friends or boyfriends... so, what has triggered off her alleged experience? Is this a case of a sheep rather than a scapegoat?

I include to think not. From what I can recall of my own long-distant adolescence, it was a time of emotional turbulence even for someone of 'normal' mental disposition in 'normal' circumstances; I am prepared to believe that any of us, at such a time of emotional crisis, without being mentally disturbed in any clinical way, could be capable of generating this sort of private fantasy experience, as a non-necessarily unhealthy way of externalising an internal dilemma. This is borne out by Jung in his monumental study (8) of an adolescent girl who came to him as a patient, in which he devotes 450 pages and the wisdom of a lifetime to answering the question, 'Why girls leave home'. You don't have to be crazy to have paranormal experiences (though maybe it helps!)

What, then, is happening to such a person when they report an alleged UFO-entity experience? I propose some such model as the following: the subject, undergoing some spiritual or emotional crisis, finds himself trapped by his dilemma- so his unconscious steps in to the rescue. Either inducing an altered-state-of-consciousness (eg a blackout or trance) or taking advantage of a spontaneous one (eg normal sleep) the unconscious induces a divided-self situation, in which it projects a hallucination which the conscious mind perceives as reality. For the form of the hallucination, the unconscious naturally turns to some appropriate contemporary symbol which will be most meaningful for the individual, which in this day and age is likely to be a space-entity, a saviour from the skies, come with the cosmic wisdom of the universe to help us poor earthlings.....

And so another CE3 goes on the files. But, be it noted, a CE3G, not a CE3S. Unless, of course, just this once, it really is.....

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UFOLOGY - A SUBJECT IN SEARCH OF AN IDENTITY - Robert Morrell

Ufology is beset with problems, a situation not helped by the clash of personalities which occur periodically. It is also hag-ridden with all manner of infantile cultists who see ufology as a convenient peg upon which to hang their childish notions, and as though this was not enough we have characters hell bent on finding mystery at the drop of a copy of FSR. Some people seem able to discover para-psychological "mysteries" with the same facility that Mrs. Whitehouse sniffs out pornography. All in all the chaotic situation leaves ufology in a state of the most utter confusion, for to be blunt, no one can be at all sure exactly what it is all about.

For over thirty years ufologists have talked of the need to establish standard definitions of the terminology employed. That this is an essential prerequisite goes with saying for without an agreed terminology that conveys exactly what is meant when a particular word, or words, is employed you have a recipe for confusion and cross talk. Although not writing of ufology, Professor John Taylor has summarised the case for agreed definitions within ufology when he wrote that "precise or scientific explanation of an event must be objective in the sense that there is agreement on the meanings of the terms used. Otherwise scientists and others could not agree about or even understand what was contained in such an explanation." (1) To their credit EUFORA have recognised the problem, but an attempt to clarify the situation through the deliberations of a Working Party which met during the last EUFORA conference made something of a hash of the matter by agreeing to a definition that was so open-ended as to perpetuate the very difficulties it should have eradicated. Little wonder that critics have called upon ufologists to ignore it and the Working Party to commence their work from the beginning again (2)

With the issue of accurate definitions in mind it is perhaps well to recall that historically ufology is concerned primarily with unexplained things seen within the context of flight, and if the subject is to establish an "identity" it must remain associated with this limitation. Once you strip "flying", or the appearance of flight away you go beyond ufology and into another sphere. If ufology is simply to be treated as a convenient term under which to group an assortment of what are visualised as enigmas then the quicker the term is dropped the better, though there may well be some who accepting that restrictions are essential within a disciplined study will remain ufologists per se. There is no short-cut to the production of answers in ufology, but we should take care to follow the advice of Rene Descartes (1596-1650), and make our research as exhaustive as possible and accept only those things that are verifiable, treating all problems according to the separate simple questions involved. There never can be too much data, but all too frequently the most sweeping conclusion are drawn on the basis of too little data. Astonishingly enough two figures well known in ufological circles, Janet and Colin Bord, have gone on record as advising ufologists to ignore the minutiae in case they miss the wider manifestations - and this advice was given in no less a place than Flying Saucer Review! (3). Try offering such absurd a suggestion to say an archaeologist, they would dismiss it with the contempt it deserves. In archaeology a fragment of potsherd, a mutilated stone or a lost coin can fill a major gap in knowledge, indeed an entire site can be dated upon a minute find of the very type the Bords are so contemptuous of.

I do not think there is any likelihood of the "wider manifestations" being ignored, indeed there are some so-called ufologists around who I suspect of as revelling in such "manifestations". It is not unusual to see cases presented which give weird and wonderful details none of which have the slightest factual support apart from the uncorroborated claims of a witness about whom the investigator knows little and appears to care even less. We had a case in FSR recently in which certain men were supposed to have seen "figures" from a UFO taking an undue interest in cattle. Although not interviewed the case was offered as of having some significance and just to ensure that the message came across, reference was made to the venue, called the "Devil's Garden", as appearing to have "forgotten links with weird experiences in the past - which may be of some significance." (4). One wonders as to whether there is any significance in the fact that one of the authors of this report, the well-known figure in ufological circles, Jenny Randles, describes herself in a UFOIN handout (for members) as a "Full time paranormal researcher" rather than a ufologist. One hardly needs to point out that it is all too easy to "mould a sighting" so as to make it conform to the investigator's predilections if he, or she, is so minded. It is an old procedure that even the Egyptian kings of ancient times indulged in, while Voltaire gave us a more recent example when he took the same data as the savant Bossuet used in presenting an account of the Battle of Rocroi as having been won through the manifestation of divine favour, to show that it was the outcome of straightforward and very mundane events (5). The treatment afforded the case reminds one strongly of the approach taken by Klass on the Coyne helicopter case of 1973 as contrasted with that of Zeidman; the former seeks to strip away the mystification element while the latter seeks to retain it (6).

The mystification process referred to above is found in the paranormalist school of pseudo-ufology. The bulk of cases presented by these people seem to have little relevance to ufology apart from the employment of certain terminology, but there can be no escaping from the willingness on the part of those who favour parapsychology to accept as factual notions which are anything but fact. One can see the glib acceptance of highly suspect concepts such as ESP in that recent and rather pretentious though very expensive publication, The Unexplained, which is likely to influence many people into accepting half-baked notions and wild hypothesis as gospel truth instead of rubbish. This is not to say that there are not serious parapsychologists, there are, but their work is marked by care, reservation and a pointed refusal to accept that which has not been fully demonstrated. The willingness to accept far-fetched ideas has resulted in a lack of attention being paid to an important aspect of ufology, the witness. I hardly need to point out that much of substance in ufology depends upon the veracity of witnesses. The witness,

as D.A. Johnson has noted, is extremely important, yet there are very few cases in which any attempt has been made to obtain all the essential data on witnesses themselves (7). When this has been done in a limited number of cases the picture that emerges is disturbing to say the least, and suggests that rather more "UFO manifestations are dependent on psychopathologically aberrant reporters" than we might think possible (8). Although this suggestion is based largely upon data from a restricted geographical area, it does focus upon the need to pay a lot more attention to witnesses. We spend a great deal of time checking out claims made by witnesses, but how many times do we check-out the witness? How many reports we read give full data on witnesses? If we are honest we will acknowledge that it is very few. There is a further difficulty here in that the evaluation of the mental processes is itself a highly complex discipline and ufology is not helped by the outpourings of amateur ufological "psychologists." Among such people there appears to be a tendency to accept data from certain classes of person in contrast to others, for example a wild claim by a doctor is more likely to be accepted at face value than if it emanated from a dustman, yet even a superficial glance at the crime reports in the press reveals that crooks are not confined to any one social class; why, then, should we accept as a matter of course a report as carrying greater weight because of the social status of a witness, or because we have a subjective willingness to accept them as level headed? Subjective criteria can be very, very wrong at times.

Recent psychological studies have made it impossible to accept with the certainty that used to be the case the results of regressive hypnosis, for tests have revealed that people who have no association with abductee experiences can produce data identical to those claiming them (9), while "real" witnesses of UFOs draw pictures of what they claim to have seen that do not differ substantially from those drawn by non-witnesses (10). As there is also a whole range of psychological factors which can come into play collectively in patterns of human behaviour, it becomes increasingly risky to accept even the most striking abductee case to actually have involved anything other than the operation of mental processes and auto-suggestion. The nervous system is highly tuned to react to both external and internal stimuli, and it is not always possible for any investigator to isolate and identify which stimuli is producing a reaction, so that any claim based upon what the witness "experiences" could well be imaginary. This situation presents another problem when we come to definitions, for it is a case that involves what is essentially a mental experience produced within an individual and which does not involve a UFO as an object external to the mental processes, count as being anything really to do with ufology? It may well be that the ufologist can learn from the results of investigations conducted by trained personnel into such cases, but there is certainly a case here for excluding them from ufology as such and leaving the investigation of them to those qualified in psychology and related subjects.

If ufology is to be some sort of Fortean Irish Stew into which anything is dumped, we cannot complain if it fails to satisfy the scientific establishment. The progress of science is no longer measured in terms of the science of the 18th and 19th centuries when a single individual could master almost the whole spectrum. Science is now marked by an intense specialisation which frequently means that individuals within a single discipline cannot understand the work of a close colleague, while he cannot fully comprehend theirs. The major discoveries are more frequently the result of team-work rather than of a breakthrough on the part of a single individual, which often makes nonsense of awards such as the Nobel Prize. If specialisation in various scientific disciplines bring concrete results why expect ufology to be able to exclude itself from it. Specialisation demands restriction, that fact cannot be avoided, and thus we arrive back to square one. While ufologists cannot agree over definitions, or seek to hedge their bets by framing definitions in such a way as to leave more bolt holes than a rabbit makes, so chaos will reign supreme, and so justify James Oberg's charge of ufologists being unscientific and placing too much stress of unsolved cases in terms of their implications rather than out of a desire to find answers (11). Indeed, it is not unusual for some ufologists to respond to attempts at finding solutions with hysterical cries of "debunker", as though they did not desire to discover solutions. (12). Is it "debunking" to make an attempt to explain a problem, or is this what ufologists should be doing? It is perhaps symptomatic of the lack of confidence among ufologists that they have to indulge in petty name-calling, while the failure to establish agreed definitions is suggestive of a desire to avoid being scientific. Such a view is to be expected from cultists but most certainly not

from individuals who seek to make ufology attractive to science. However, until ufologists can bring order to the chaotic situation in which ufology now finds itself it will remain a subject without any clear identity.

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MAPIT NEWSDESK

Welcome to this, the first 1981 issue of Skywatch, somewhat late in appearing due to our printer, Freda, being in hospital for an operation. I'm glad to report that she is making steady progress. On with the news:

Flying Saucer Review have again increased their subscription rates from £5.70 to £6.00 for six issues

The UFO Group 'Search West' recently produced the first issue of their magazine; details from 120 Savernake Ave., Melksham, Wilts, SN12 7HQ.....

New books to look out for are: Harmonic 288 - The pulse of the Universe by Bruce Cathie. This House is Haunted by Guy Lyon Playfair. Into Thin Air by Paul Begg and Alien Quest by George Leonard. All paperbacks and published by Sphere.....

Are you interested in Science Fiction and Fantasy? If so, then try a copy of the new magazine 'Triple Echo'. It aims to be a platform for writing, artwork, etc. Price: 40p a copy from: 236 Fletcher Road, Preston, PR1 5HH.....

The Federation of UFO Research recently published the case history of a possible CE/EM effect case at Wimboldsley in Cheshire from September last year. This excellent document runs to 18 pages and is a must for all serious researchers into the subject. Write to FURFOR at 30 Charlesworth Street, Crewe, Cheshire, for further details.....

More books to look out for are: UFO Study by Jenny Randles (Hale) - £7.95. The Kaikoura UFOs by Bill Startup and Neil Illingworth (Hodder and Stoughton) - £7.50. Are we being Watched? by Janet and Colin Bord (Angus and Robertson) - £3.95.....

Reviews of books will appear in the next issue. Your subscription has run out if a red cross appears on the following line

Bye for now! D.R.....

• MIDDLE UFOLOGY: Or How to Sit on the Fence without Falling Off.- Jenny Randles.

I have been delighted with the standard of SKYWATCH magazine over the past year or so. And I admit to having considerable sympathy with FUFOR's fine investigation methodology and ruthless insistence on standards in their published output. These signs are good and healthy ones.

SKYWATCH has suddenly found itself Britain's chief (if not only) exponent of what the American's term "Middle Ufology", an apt phrase for a faction most British 'skywatchers' (excuse the pun!) do not even consider to exist. Middle Ufology sits on the fence, between the two extremes provided by what I will call "Exotic Ufology" and the self-styled "New Ufology". MAGONIA is the only true representative of the latter, providing as it does a fascinating socio-cultural insight to UFOs and the vast global belief system, of which they form but a part. There are many representatives of "Exotic Ufology". Two interesting ones, published to unusually high standards, are UFO RESEARCH REVIEW (with its epitomisation of the "nuts and bolts", if it's real it's a UFO, approach) and EARTHLINK (which seems to have no genre, allowing apparant psychotic loonies to expound their daft theories alongside scholarly, but nonetheless, extreme and radical theoretical approaches). I read them all with intense fascination, and would wish them all long life. Of course I doubt if UFO RESEARCH REVIEW and EARTHLINK would relish being lumped together (and they are just examples of a much wider school of thought, with in-between members, which runs the full gauntlet of "exotic" theories)

Middle Ufology is a valuable new development and addition to the field. It is typified in the writings of Australian's such as Keith Basterfield and Mark Moravec and that grossly under-rated ufological genius (who did not even merit a mention in Ron Story's UFO ENCYCLOPEDIA)... American, Allen Greenfield. I feel enormous sympathy with their utterances, and whilst Britain has yet to produce a true Middle Ufologist I know there are others over here (such as John Hind) who share a goodly percentage of the ground-rules. It is a pity there is such an inconvenient little thing like the world standing in the way of what would be a really valuable conference. I feel that although super-duper conferences, such as the two London Congress's, are all good fun and provide a tremendous opportunity to meet overseas colleagues, their contribution in a ufological sense is rather limited. But I had better not press the point because last time I did (via SKYWATCH) it generated a rather unexpected vicious backlash, and I am not in a masochistic mood.

What makes Middle Ufology special? Basically it is because it starts without pre-conception. This is something which typifies the "exotic" ufologists. Whether they believe UFOs are spaceships, ball lightning or psychic projections they believe they are something (to a greater or lesser degree). I did for a long time myself. Now I am not sure they are, and what is more I am not sure if matters! "New" Ufologists are rather closer to the middle with their approach, but they still lean strongly (rather too strongly at times, I fear) in the direction of pure psychology. Finding contrived (and perhaps illusory) psychological meaning in a UFO experience can get out of hand before one realises it. And whilst I am the first to admit that the physical evidence is rather less than the exotic ufologists would have us believe it is not non-existent, as the psychologically orientated (or obsessed) researchers need to have us believe. When you are talking about a mythological projection of the human psyche something like a radar-tracking is a damn nuisance!

Middle Ufologists simply accept the stories, and treat them all as equal, by the witness a naval commander with a hundred PH.Ds, or be it Nellie Nutcase who talks to the spirits (and sometimes alien beings). The evidence ranks alongside these stories, (such as it is) and it is all sifted with the aim of producing questions, rather than answering them (that comes later). They do not create a hypothesis and then search for proof to vindicate it. This is shown by my suggestion in SKYWATCH THAT IF WE accept Tony Pace's researches that a CE3 sighting was stimulated by the moon (as seems reasonable) then the thing to do is ask why. Question what this teaches us. Not sweep it under the carpet as a "misidentification" or worse still an "Hallucination". I stick with my belief that this is akin to finding a pound note on the floor beneath a slot machine, which only accept pennence peices and discarding it with disgust. Perhaps, as Tony would have us believe, that is how scientists operate. If so, all I can say is, no wonder they are all paupers!

The value of all this is that it reveals great truths about the UFO enigma, sometimes simplifying certain aspects (like making obvious the correlation between psychopathic disturbance and certain CE4 reports) and sometimes just revealing how complex and contradictory the UFO phenomenon is. Middle Ufologists seem to have a refreshingly unique characteristic. They are able to honestly admit (even to themselves, which is perhaps the most important thing) that they really do not know. They do not know what UFOs are. They do not even know if UFOs (in the sense of anything exotic) exists or not. And they can listen with concentration to the utterances of the sceptics (like Menzel, Klass and the much maligned, and far more rational, Ian Ridpath) without turning blue in the face and venting steam from their nostrils (an apparent character trait of the exotic ufologist when faced with criticism). In other words they are not shackled by belief, or even ~~th~~ need to find belief. If a case is explained it is a triumph (not a failure) and a stimulus for interesting questions (not the signal for four letter expletives). There is not desire to prove or disprove, just an urge to find out.

This might sound like a statement of the obvious (to those who are close to being "Middle Ufologists") or a load of old cobblers (to someone out on the limb of one of the extremes). But to the truly open-minded investigator it ought to be a shot of adrenalin through his bloodstream... a catalyst to continue a fight he might otherwise be tempted to give up. This dilemma often faces a ufologist after a few years (unless he is so much on the fringes that he doesn't give a damn about the evidence. He knows). Perhaps he suspects UFOs are all in the mind, and thinks, what is the good of trying to convince folk of that. Or perhaps he believes they are physically real, but despite years of searching for the "proof" he cannot even find evidence to come close to doing that. It is a strange intoxication to suddenly find that one can look at UFO sightings commentary and experience with quite new eyes, not worrying whether this will help or hinder one's own ideas but thinking each time... "how interesting, now what the heck does that teach us?".

I will give an example. Bernard Delair of CONTACT has recently published studies (in BUFORA JOURNAL AND EXRTHLINK) of an event that took place on the night of December 31 1978. Hundreds of people all over Britain (and parts of Northern Europe) saw an anomalous aerial phenomenon which he contends was an unknown. In fact he calculates that three separate UFOs were present at the same time and views this as extraordinarily important as indeed, if so, it would be. UFOs are not normally witnessed by hundreds independently, photographed several times and seen on radar. There is no doubt whatsoever that this phenomenon was objectively real, according to Bernard it was a UFO, ergo it was the most important event ever to have occurred..... and he berates Ufologists for having ignored it.

Bernard rejects the "official" opinion that this was the re-entry of the booster rocket from Russian satellite COSMOS 1068, primarily because of the witness testimony. He seems to neglect past studies of witness testimony, during similar spectacular natural events, which show interestingly consistent features of witness appreciation. I would refer people to that often-attacked goldmine of UFO information, the Condon report, for an analysis of witness sightings of the earlier ZOND IV re-entry. The correlation is too close for coincidence. Since both these incidents have considerable parallels with a private study (conducted by members of what is now derided as the 'non-scientific group PARASEARCH) into the spectacular fireball meteor of June 6 1976, the outcome appears logical.

There is no real doubt in my mind that what virtually everyone saw and reported (to greater or lesser degrees of accuracy) was the re-entry of COSMOS 1068 (although it is of course feasible that sightings of other contemporary phenomena have been gathered together in the same data net). To most people therefore the question is a simple one. Either Bernard Delair is right, and there was a peculiar phenomenon (and in view of the well attested isolation in space/time of UFO encounters a quite unique one), or else I (and in this case the M.O.D.) are right and it was COSMOS 1068 misperceived. You take your choice. And it is true that Bernard is a first-class ufologist, with an excellent track-record, and some well-qualified witnesses backing him up. Therefore he commands respect, and the question becomes not one of mere belief.

But this is where Middle Ufology comes in, for in fact this question of "who is right" is not all that important, or the be-all and end-all of the situation. Since if Bernard is right it does not get us too far, and since there is little cause to doubt that COSMOS 1068 did re-enter that night, the question to frame concerns the potential misidentification of this stimulus and what it tells us about eye-witness testimony. That is a tremendous opportunity for scientific research. We have a field situation experiment, which in Ufology is all too rare. Bernard is absolutely right when he attacks ufologists (of all calibres) for ignoring this event. For the psychologists swept it under the carpet just as much as those who thought "this is not a UFO, how boring, let's find something that is") It may not be quite too late to do something, and I will credit one group (the North Lancs UFO Investigation Group) for a fine submitted effort to NUFON on their collated data. I have not ignored it (indeed I refer to the incident in my new boo, UFO STUDY, published in June) and I am working with the data more thoroughly for my current literary project with Robert Hale.

I am very optimistic about the advantages of Middle Ufology, and hope that more will be swayed by its hypnotic lure. But I have some doubts. For I have tried to interest British Ufologists in this approach. Ultimately I persuaded four other researchers to join me in a project (a kind of Ufologists Condon Report) which intensively investigated cases which ufologists argued had convinced them of the reality of a physical UFO. Re-examining the data from first principles, without any preconceptions whatsoever, and unlike Condon not trying to prove if they are reports of spaceships or not but proving if they are evidence for novel phenomena or not. Whilst we did formulate the project in October 1980, to date (six months later) it has not got off the ground. Perhaps it will do. Perhaps Middle Ufologists from other parts of the world will join with me in revitalising the idea (I give my address for this purpose) But in the meantime I have not given up. I am going ahead on my own and persuaded by publishers to take on the project. So the results of a one-year pilot study will be published (although probably not now before 1983) and I hope it might provide a sight of the way ahead.

Being a Ufologist does not mean one must adopt rigid standpoints. I have moved across the UFO spectrum, being close to the fringes at times. I do not mind admitting that I am less persuaded today than I once was by some of my own arguments in UFOs: A BRITISH VIEWPOINT, although I do not feel ashamed of having speculated. One makes no progress by just sitting on the fence, although it is the only place to be in order to judge whether one should jump or not. Of course if one jumps, and tests the ground, there is no stigma in deciding one might be wrong and returning to the favoured vantage point of the middle.

Middle Ufology is one aspect of Ufology. The other two approaches are equally valid and I do not wish to see them disappear because they contribute to the total picture. I have written for journals across the UFO spectrum and see nothing wrong in continuing to do so. To be a Middle Ufologist one must associate (and give due attention to) all of one's colleagues, wherever they sit on the UFO spectrum.

This is why it seems sad to me that some people in the subject continue to talk about wars, and personality clashes. I am supposed to be in the forefront of this battleground but really it is a nonsense. OK - so I have my points of disagreement with other ufologists. If we all agreed with everything everybody ever said, or kept silent if we didn't, we would soon happily atrophy. This is indeed happening to an alarming percentage of world-wide ufology. And they do not seem to care over much, because finding answers is self-destructive. It rocks the boat. So far as I am aware nobody in British Ufology is currently refusing to speak to me and my relations with BUFORA (who seem to be regarded as my arch adversaries) are at present mostly amiable (in the very least) and in some cases rather more than amicable. I see this as not simply healthy but essential. I also believe in making my point of view heard, because it is a darn great waste of time having ideas and never acting upon them. Of course, this sometimes generates friction, but it is a test of who is and who is not the real ufologist (those who are only interested in cooperation and truth) that they can accept this with good humour and in a spirit of scientific endeavour and get on with the job. It seems to me that the generals declared an armistice quite some time ago, but certain war correspondents do not appear to have noticed!

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GNOME NEWS: The publication of the Gnome Club of Great Britain. Membership in GB £2.50, elsewhere £3.90 includes enamelled gnome badge and gnome news three times a year. The Gnome Club is at The Old Rectory, West Putford, Devon, EX22 7XE.....

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UFO CASSETTES: The following recordings are available price £3.00 for two.

Tape 43 - Are other worlds watching us?

Tape 44 - Are UFOs Real?

Tape 45 - News and views and Christ's return.

Tape 47 - Out of this World, BBC1 programme on UFOs and Alternative 3 ITV programme.

Tape 53 - UFOs and religion by Nigel Blair.

Tape 54 - Discussion on UFOs - Cradle Hill, Warminster, Reg.Bradbury, Nigel Blair and US Broadcaster Bryce Bond.

Tapes 43 - 45 by Reginald Bradbury. A full list of tapes is available from:
The Kingdom Voice, Riverside Cottage, Bridgend, Harford, Devon, EX10 0NG..

THE END BITS
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Quotes:

Balancing the family budget these days is like trying to stand on your head in a hammock - Mable Wagthorpe.....

The reason the evening TV hours are called print time is because the shows give the viewers plenty to beef about - Carruthers

The old maxim that there's no use crying over spilled milk was suggested long before it reached today's price. - Lulu Trimble

Amusing Comment:

Asked why a myth was, a boy wrote: 'A myth is a spythster that lysthps'....

Further Quotee

Definition of a 1981 baby sitter: a teenager who comes to act like an adult while adults go out to act like teenagers. - Credit ?

Burning Ambition: A suicide bid by a Johannesburg man who poured petrol over himself fizzled out yesterday - when he found he had no matches! - Daily Star, 20.2.81.

Finally:

A symposium on Extraterrestrial Experience and related subjects is to be held at the Belgrave Hotel, City Road, Chester, from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Saturday, 27th June. Write to: Lynne and Tony Halsall, 8 The Ridgeway, Northop Hall, Clwyd, North Wales, for details

SUBSCRIPTION AND MEMBERSHIP TO MAPIT AND SKYWATCH IS £3.00 (6 issues) SINGLE COPIES ARE 35p EACH. OVERSEAS RATES ON REQUEST AND EXCHANGES WELCOME.

THE MAPIT RESOURCES CENTRE.

The need for information is as basic a requirement for mankind as any other. Information as a resource, however, is increasing at as fast a rate as 'natural resources' are decreasing, perhaps even faster.

'Ufology' can itself be termed a subject with an ever-increasing amount of information coming out of it; indeed, it is not alone in this, psychic phenomena, the paranormal, Earth mysteries, new age and occult lore are amongst other such subjects one can mention. The foundation stone for all objective research-work is information because without it no research can exist. One of the main reasons people are deterred from becoming involved in this type of endeavour is the lack of accessibility to the data they may require. Science has long established channels of access to proper library facilities, which enable individuals to acquire items of interest. To quote Dr. R. Marrell, "Ufology, whilst claiming a status within various disciplines, has not even managed to provide itself with elementary research facilities of this type." Since our joint 'Statement of Intent' was published in 1979, MAPIT and FUFOR have discussed the possibility of setting up a 'Resources Centre'. Both organisations fully recognise the problems this involves and we would like readers of this information sheet to understand that was not a hastily taken decision by overenthusiastic individuals who will lose their interest in the project after a couple of months. We intend to start the Centre and wish to appeal to you all to assist us.

There are many good reasons for starting such a Centre, for instance: (1) it will offer a comprehensive collection of reference material in one central location, which will include subjects other than 'Ufology'; (2) the information stored at the Centre will be available to all interested parties and (3) over the long-term it will establish a much needed, long overdue, archival collection of items, which will be a historic record for all future generations to make use of.

Any collection of material must be fully indexed and catalogued for easy reference. To assist the Centre we have ordered a 'Sinclair ZX-81' computer, which will allow us to utilise the latest technology for setting up three main indexes. These are a General Index; Subject Index and an Abstract Index. The potential for forming new indexes will be greatly enlarged with the help of the 'ZX-81'; as John Prytz has said, "any information that can be stored on a piece of paper can be stored in a computer. For examples:- bibliographies, names of authors, titles of books, articles from journals with specific dates and edition, cross-references, indexes that you own, plus the data bases of other ufologists - including their names, addresses and telephone numbers etc.

The Centre will be a facility for everyone to have access to, be they involved in serious research, the media, free-lance writers or just ordinary individuals who require an answer to a particular query. The methods of obtaining the material will be via the telephone, writing to the Centre and in some cases, photocopying the material required and sending it to the enquirers. Finally, of course, information can be obtained from personal visits. There are many things to be organised, the formation of a regular team of translators is something that can be planned for in the long-term, as can the purchase of a quality photo-copier that can be housed at the Centre. The Centre will, of

Continued.....

course, have to charge for supplying any information in order to cover costs for its upkeep.

This information sheet has been compiled to inform you of this project, we wish to hear from you about the Centre. We would like as many sources as possible to support us; this can be done in various ways. It is, for instance, financially impossible for us to subscribe to every magazine, newsletter and journal published, we would like to hear from Editors who are willing to donate copies (both back and future) of their publications for inclusion in the centre. Any donations will be greatly appreciated, eg: newsclippings, old magazines, tapes, photographs, case-histories etc.

To aid the purchase of collections and individual items - a support fund has been formed and persons wishing to send any donations to it are asked to forward them to the MAPIT address.

MAPIT, David Rees, 92 Hillcrest Road, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire,
SK2 5SE, England. (Tel: 061-4834210).

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